

Frequently Asked Questions LARE Aquatic Plant Management Funds

Lake and River Enhancement Program (LARE) IDNR Division of Fish and Wildlife

Why were aquatic plant management funds added to the LARE program?

Since 1987, the Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) program has been modified several times to meet the shifting challenges facing aquatic resources in Indiana.

The “traditional” part of the program provides grants to entities such as lake associations, conservancy districts, park boards or other entities for management of publicly accessible lakes. Projects include:

- Lake or watershed diagnostic study
- Engineering feasibility study for remediation of identified problem
- Engineering design study for remedial action
- Construction of remedial measures to address water quality problems
- Development of lake or watershed management plan
- Water quality monitoring incidental to other program elements

To help private landowners install conservation measures on their lands, the LARE program partners with county-level soil and water conservation districts on multi-year “watershed land treatment (WLT) projects” directed primarily at agricultural lands. About \$600,000 is awarded each year as cost-share funds for 25 to 30 active watershed projects in various locations around the state.

Legislation in 2003 increased the scope of the LARE program to address the symptoms that remain after improvement in watershed conservation practices. Boat fees that are the source of LARE revenue are now also used for:

- Sediment removal from public lakes
- Control of exotic or invasive plants or animals in public lakes
- IDNR marine law enforcement

How much funding is available and how has it been distributed?

In calendar year 2004, the Bureau of Motor Vehicles collected LARE boat fees totaling \$3,351,960. Those funds are divided equally among the DNR Division of Law Enforcement, “traditional” LARE program elements, and for sediment removal and aquatic plant control in lakes.

In the first four years of the expanded program, many lake organizations have improved their understanding of aquatic plant ecology and gained access to state funds to reduce destructive impacts of nuisance invasive species in public lakes.

Rigorous surveys and careful planning are required to ensure that state funding supports cost-effective and ecologically-sound progress towards three goals:

- 1) Develop or maintain a stable, diverse aquatic plant community;
- 2) Prevent or control negative impacts of invasive aquatic plant species; and

- 3) Provide reasonable public recreational access while minimizing negative impacts on plant, fish and wildlife resources.

Since 2004, 55 associations representing over 70 lakes have developed formal plans that will make them eligible for funding. In 2007, over \$900,000 in state funds were allocated to selectively control nonnative invasive plants in 36 publicly-accessible waters across Indiana, including glacial lakes in the north and reservoirs in the southern part of the state. The state LARE program provided cost-share funding of up to 90% for herbicide treatments, including major eradication projects in response to introduction of two new noxious weeds (hydrilla at Lake Manitou near Rochester and Brazilian elodea at Griffy Lake near Bloomington).

What are the grant deadlines and when are grants approved?

All those interested in applying for state Lake and River Enhancement (LARE) grants for traditional projects (diagnostic studies and engineering projects) must prepare a preproposal by January 31 each year. Applications specifically for sediment removal from publicly accessible lakes are due by December 31 each year and those for exotic aquatic vegetation management in public lakes are due by January 15. Local sponsors generally request up to three times as much money as is available each year for LARE-funded projects.

Awards are approved on a competitive basis by IDNR Department Director and distributed to grant recipients within months of application. Awards for aquatic plant control will be determined in early March to allow adequate time for permit review and selection of contractors for effective early season herbicide treatments.

Application forms are on the LARE website at:

<http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/lare/manual.html>

For examples of plant plans from other lakes, download studies from the online library at:

http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/lare/lare_reports.html

For more information:

State program staff can assist with questions about lake and watershed management, as well as use of program funds. Two aquatic biologists split state project responsibilities along the lines of IDNR Fisheries Districts (a map is located in the Fishing Guide or on the web at <http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/fish/fishing/fishbiol.htm>).

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